

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

- 1           1.     A method for managing digital data storage in a computer based data  
2 storage system, comprising:  
3           acquiring a representation of an image from a client;  
4           associating the representation of the image with the client;  
5           storing the representation in a first image file format in the data storage  
6 system;  
7           receiving a client request for delivery of the stored representation in a  
8 preferred image file format;  
9           determining if the first image file format is compatible with the preferred  
10 image file format wherein the data storage system translates the representation from  
11 the first image file format to the preferred file format when the first image file format  
12 is incompatible with the preferred file format; and  
13          delivering the representation of the image in the preferred file format.
- 1           2.     The method of claim 1, wherein acquiring comprises transforming a  
2 hard-copy source into the first image file format.
- 1           3.     The method of claim 1, wherein acquiring comprises processing at  
2 least one file associated with an electronic mail message.
- 1           4.     The method of claim 1, wherein acquiring comprises a direct network  
2 transfer from a client-computing device to the computer based data storage system.
- 1           5.     The method of claim 1, wherein associating comprises inserting a data  
2 storage system file identifier into a transaction record of a database.

1           6.       The method of claim 1, wherein storing comprises saving at least one  
2 instance of the representation on a primary data storage medium and saving at least  
3 one instance of the representation on a secondary data storage medium.

1           7.       The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2           maintaining a copy of the representation in the first image file format and in  
3 subsequent preferred file formats in the data storage system.

1           8.       The method of claim 1, wherein the data storage system translation is  
2 initiated by the obsolescence of the first file format.

1           9.       The method of claim 1, wherein the data storage system translation is  
2 initiated by a customer request to access the image.

1           10.      The method of claim 1, wherein delivering comprises transferring the  
2 representation in the preferred file format over a network.

1           11.      The method of claim 1, wherein delivering comprises transferring the  
2 representation to at least one portable data storage media.

1           12.      The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 transferring the representation to a hard-copy medium.

1           13.      The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 editing the representation in accordance with a client request; and  
3 generating a fee upon storing the edited representation.

1           14.      The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 generating a fee upon translating the representation.

1           15.      The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 generating a fee upon delivering the representation.

1           16.     The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2           generating a periodic fee in return for providing data access.

1           17.     The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2           controlling third party access to the stored representation in accordance with  
3           client direction.

1           18.     The method of claim 6, wherein the secondary data storage medium is  
2           geographically disposed from the primary data storage device.

1           19.     A computer based data file storage management system, comprising:  
2           means for acquiring a digital representation of at least one image from a client;  
3           means for identifying the client;  
4           means for storing the digital representation in a first file format;  
5           means for processing requests for copies of the stored digital representation  
6           wherein the request contains information indicative of a preferred file format and a  
7           preferred delivery medium;  
8           means for translating the digital representation to the preferred file format  
9           responsive to the determining means; and  
10          means for transferring the digital representation from the means for storing to  
11          the preferred delivery medium.

1           20.     The system of claim 19, further comprising:  
2           means for controlling third party access to the stored digital representation  
3           responsive to a client initiated distribution schedule.

1           21.     The system of claim 19, wherein the processing means is responsive to  
2           a client request to receive the digital representation in the second file format.

1           22.     The system of claim 19, wherein the acquiring means comprises a  
2           computing device in communication with the client via a wide area network.

1           23.     The system of claim 19, wherein the acquiring means comprises a  
2 digital imaging device.

1           24.     The system of claim 19, wherein the translating means is a software  
2 program operable on a computing device in communication with the file storage  
3 management system.

1           25.     The system of claim 20, wherein the controlling means comprises a  
2 database.

1           26.     A computer-readable medium having a computer program, comprising:  
2           a logic configured to associate a client with a digital representation of an  
3 image in a first image file format;  
4           a logic configured to store the digital representation;  
5           a logic configured to receive client requests for delivery of the digital  
6 representation in a delivery file format;  
7           a logic configured to retrieve the digital representation from storage responsive  
8 to the received client request;  
9           a logic configured to transform the digital representation when the first image  
10 file format is not in conformance with the delivery file format.

1           27.     The computer-readable medium of claim 26, further comprising:  
2           a logic configured to receive third-party requests for delivery of the digital  
3 representation in a third party desired file format, wherein the logic configured to  
4 retrieve is responsive to a client initiated third party access grant and wherein the logic  
5 configured to transform modifies the digital representation when the first image file  
6 format is not in conformance with the desired file format.

1           28.     The computer-readable medium of claim 26, further comprising:  
2           a logic configured to transfer the digital representation from the stored representation to  
3 a preferred data-delivery medium.

1           29.     An electronic data storage system, comprising:  
 2           a primary data storage device;  
 3           a computing device communicatively coupled to the primary data storage  
 4 device, the computing device having an execution memory containing a data manager  
 5 application;  
 6           a network interface operable to communicatively couple the computing device  
 7 to a client and a secondary data storage device via a wide area network, wherein the  
 8 data manager is programmed to process a client request to store an image by saving a  
 9 digital representation of the image in a first file format within both the primary data  
 10 storage device and the secondary storage device and wherein the data manager is  
 11 further programmed to process a request to receive a copy of the image in a preferred  
 12 file format.

1           30.     The system of claim 29, further comprising:  
 2           an image acquisition device in communication with the computing device and  
 3 configured to generate the digital representation.

1           31.     The system of claim 29, further comprising:  
 2           a data storage translator configured to receive the digital representation in the  
 3 preferred file format and to apply the digital representation to a data storage medium  
 4 responsive to the request to receive.

1           32.     The system of claim 29, wherein the data manager comprises software  
 2 configured to translate the digital representation from the first file format to the  
 3 preferred file format.

1           33.     The system of claim 29, further comprising:  
 2           a peripheral device communicatively coupled to the computing device  
 3 configured to receive the digital representation and generate a hard-copy rendition of  
 4 the image.

- 1 34. The system of claim 29, further comprising:
- 2 an image editor communicatively coupled to the computing device.